

City of Rockville Commission on the Environment  
February 14, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Faith Klareich (FK), Seth Adams (SA), David Davis (DD), Beri Kravitz (BK), Tolulope Odunlami (TO) and Geoff Sanders (GS) and Sura Yakowitz (SY).

Absent: Michelle Clark (MC) and Kris Dighe (KD).

Also in attendance: Staff Liaison Nate Wall (NW).

**1. Welcome, News and Agenda Review**

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 pm in the Black Eyed Susan Room at Rockville City Hall.

This will be SY's last meeting as a Commissioner, as she will be moving to Portland, OR next week. Congratulations Sura!

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

DD moves, SY seconds to adopt the December 11<sup>th</sup> and January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Unanimous vote to approve both sets of meeting minutes.

**3. PROS Plan Update**

NW explained that he and FK had attended the last Parks Advisory Board meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>, where the Parks Dept. presented their concept for the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. Also in attendance were members of the Historic District Commission, Bicycle Advisory Group, Nature Center Advisory Group, Rockville Dog Owners Group, and the newly-formed Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation. It was very interesting to get these groups together and discuss the elements of the PROS Plan – FK had an opportunity to comment on the energy and environmental impacts of the Plan while at the same time educating other Boards and Commissions about the issues involved.

At this point, the City's consultants are in a data gathering mode, trying to get input as to what the Boards and Commissions thought was important elements of the Plan. They will be coming up with a rough draft, which NW will circulate to the Commission for review and comment.

**4. Stormwater Utility Update**

NW said that the Commission's comments on the Stormwater Ordinance and Stormwater Regulations had been submitted as part of the Public Comment period. City staff will be reviewing and responding to comments, for presentation to the Mayor & Council in March. In terms of the Utility Fee, it is currently not known whether it would take effect starting in 2008 or 2009 – future Mayor & Council meetings that enact the enabling legislation for the fee would make this determination.

**5. Green Building Program Development**

Discussion of the upcoming Green Building Program Creation Process. NW mentioned that the City had contracted with the Keystone Group for meeting facilitation. NW also presented the potential list of stakeholders to specifically invite to this first (of many) round of stakeholder meetings. Several Commissioners offered suggested changes/additions to the list.

FK mentioned that a note could be posted to the Green Building Institute mentioning that the City was looking in to a green building program, and that interested individuals in the green building field could contact the Commission if they are interested in participating.

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FK said that now the Commission needed to come up with a list of concepts that everyone wanted to get vetted by this stakeholder process, so that the facilitators could ensure that those points get covered. Examples include if and how to use the LEED rating system, possible bulk Energy Star purchasing, looking to influence process anytime money changes hands (what can be required before a home sale, or a new property lease for example?), how to handle existing buildings and homes – want to effect change but not make it overly burdensome, etc.

NW to schedule an “intro” meeting with Keystone in the coming weeks. We will also hold a kick-off meeting for participating Commissioners before the stakeholder process gets going (currently scheduled for early April).

## **6. Working Group Updates**

### Watershed Protection Working Group

The Watershed Protection group met last week and consolidated the Commission’s comments on the Stormwater Ordinance and Regulations.

### High Performance Building and Outreach Working Group

Met on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and broke up major components of green development amongst the members such that they would be knowledgeable for the green building program creation process. Also, created a Yahoo group for Rockville Green Building.

## **7. Staff Updates**

NW showed the Commission the newest version of the Sustainable Rockville logos. Additional comments were made; Staff hopes to have the logo in use by April (lots of environmental activities in “Earth Day month”).

NW said that the Mayor & Council had initially thought to change the proposed Refuse & Recycling Commission into a Task Force; it now appears as though there will be no officially appointed group of any kind. Thus the Environment Commission should consider weighing in the on environmental components of the new refuse and recycling program once it has been rolled out.

### Benchmarking Study

NW informed the Commission that Environmental Management Division staff, along with FK, had met with the Mayor to discuss a citywide benchmarks study, as well as a more simplified “environmental report card”. The report card is envisioned as a dashboard report, but since this is the first year there would be nothing to compare to and it would thus be more of a baseline.

FK mentioned that Chicago or New York (or even Nassau County) may have good metrics to use. Also, you want to be sure to use the appropriate ratios (i.e., normalize the result versus population, households, square footage, etc.) so that you can still get an accurate comparison in the future where there will be population growth, additional development, etc. In other words, pick a metric like total energy consumption without dividing out to reflect for current conditions.

DD mentioned that it would probably be helpful to collect additional data, even if you don’t use it for the reporting. E.g., if you are already collecting certain data, collecting a bit more may be relatively simple and could be more useful for comparisons down the line. An example might be with the website – instead of just tracking # of hits, track which specific pages are getting the hits, when, where are the users located (Rockville IPs versus elsewhere), etc.

There was also a discussion of what happens when a particular metric comes up red: this is a political risk, and could divert funding/effort into fixing a “red” rating that is either inevitable (e.g., our local watersheds will likely remain in a “degraded” condition due to the impacts of

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urbanization – although we certainly plan to continue to keep trying!) or not necessarily an environmental priority. Thus need to have policy in place on how to respond to results of study updates in future years.

**8. Possible Closed Session**

The Commission decided to postpone the closed session to discuss the upcoming vacancy until next month's agenda.

**9. Wrap-Up and Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.